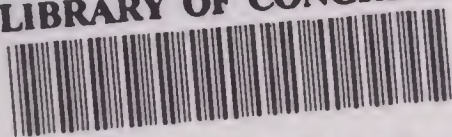


JACINTH AND HER FAIRY FRIENDS

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Nellie M. Pairpoint

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JACINTH
AND HER FAIRY FRIENDS



Hold onto the hazel-wand, Jacinth," cried Chestnut.

JACINTH AND HER FAIRY FRIENDS

By
Nellie M Pairpoint
Illustrated by the Author



Published by
W. A. WILDE COMPANY
Boston—Chicago.

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JACINTH AND HER FAIRY FRIENDS

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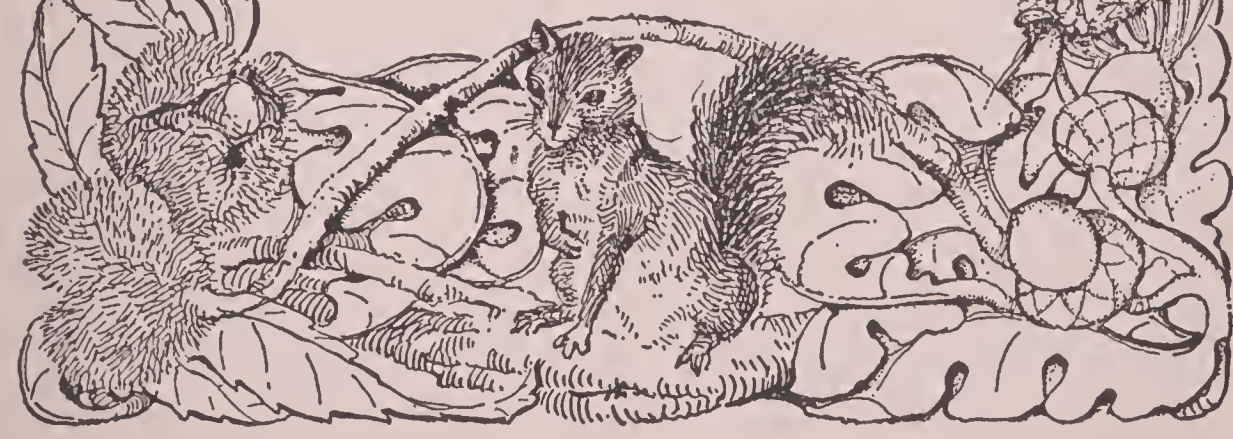
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*Affectionately dedicated to all those boys
and girls who are watching the flowers
that bloom ; and listening to the brooks
that sing ; and are loving friends to all
the living things of the great, green
woods ; and with the help of the Fairies
of sunshine and shadow, are making
the world a better place to live in*



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Jacinth and Her Fairy Friends

NOEL'S sister, Jacinth, stood by the window in the cheerful living-room of their tiny cottage, way, way up on the side of the big hill. Her little sister, Betty, was making a cloak for her doll, Bettina, and her mother was finishing the new dress that Jacinth was to wear to-morrow when she went to town, to spend the rest of the month with her grandmother.

Through the window she could see the mist-wreaths blowing before the gusty wind,—right across the hillside, down into the valley, and across the rolling fields beyond.

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As the wreaths came to the big trees that grew where the land seemed to meet the sky, they caught and lingered, just as if they were sorry to leave the valley, and the fields, and the big hill, and to go their way over to the other side, where they would come to the town.

For the town was full of tall houses and little narrow streets, and there were big chimneys, each throwing out a cloud of smoke. Perhaps the summer mists knew that they got tangled up among these tall houses and big chimneys and little narrow streets, and that the smoke from the chimneys got all mixed up with them. Then they lost their delicate whiteness, and violet shadows, and gleams of pink and blue, where the rays of sunlight shone through them. They became just common gray fogs. No wonder they clung to the trees, where the land seemed to meet the sky!

So the clouds let the fretful little gusts of wind blow them back and forth, and up and down, then away over to the trees, then back again into the pleasant valley, and it seemed to Jacinth, as she

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watched them, that they hated to leave it, to go their way over the trees into the town on the other side of the valley.

“Jacinth,” said Betty, as she came and joined her at the window, “don’t you think Bettina’s cloak is going to be nice?”

“Yes,” replied Jacinth, but she did not seem much interested.

“You see,” continued Betty, “Mother’s cut it long, so it will be just like yours, and she is going to give me a piece of the plaid like your new dress, to line it with.”

“It’ll keep her nice and warm,” responded Jacinth. “Oh, Betty, just look at the mist blowing all through the valley.”

“And there’s another shower, too,” said Betty, as they both watched from the window. Then Betty held Bettina up between them, so she could look out, too.

It looked as if the mist-wreaths chased each other over the fields, and round the wild-rose bushes that

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were just beginning to bloom in all the fence-corners. They clustered round the spirea and the meadow-sweet, hiding one from the other for a moment, and then clinging to each other, till they seemed to be playing a merry game of hide-and-seek.

Then a little shower would join the game,—a warm, soft, gentle, little shower that passed in a moment, and almost made the buttercups and daisies and dandelions grow as the two girls looked at them. Then followed a gleam of sunshine, till it seemed as if the whole wide valley and the soft blue sky had joined the game.

And there was Pixie Woods, too. That grew all the way up the big hill, right up to the garden of their house. Only the path down the hillside was clear, where their brother, Noel, went every morning to work, and came home to Mother, and Jacinth, and little sister Betty, every evening. Then Pixie Woods stretched all round the hill.

“Look, Betty!” exclaimed Jacinth. “Just look how the leaves of all the trees in Pixie Woods are

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dancing in the gusts of wind, and shining and sparkling in the gleams of sunshine.”

“And I can see the rain-drops glistening on all the wild geraniums, and the red and yellow columbines, and the pink lady’s-slippers, that grow along the path,” said Betty.

“Just as if they were wearing diamonds,” went on Jacinth.

“Perhaps they are,” said Betty, “because this is the first of June.”

Then both Jacinth and Betty grew thoughtful, as they looked at Pixie Woods, and thought of the Pixie Fairies, that everybody round there knew lived in the very center of the woods. And Bettina leaned over against Jacinth’s arm, and gazed straight out at the sky, as if she was thinking of something, too.

“It was a day just like this,” said Jacinth, “when Noel came home and told us that he was sure he had heard the Pixie Fairies out in the woods. He thought they must have been dancing round a hazel-bush.”

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“Then he thought they must be up in the trees, the way the leaves rustled,” continued Betty.

“And do you remember, Betty,” went on Jacinth, “the day he came home and said he was sure he had heard the Pixie Fairies singing?”

“Yes,” responded Betty eagerly. “He said it sounded just like chimes on silver bells.”

“And,” went on Jacinth, getting quite excited, “he had followed the sounds ever and ever so far, right into Pixie Woods.”

“Till he came to the big rocks,” continued Betty, “where the spring is; that’s the very center of Pixie Woods, and right beside Crystal Pool.”

“Then there was the night he was so late,” Jacinth remembered. “He really saw the Pixiekins and talked with them. I wish I could see them, too!”

“So do I,” said Betty. “I wish I could see Willow Pixiekin.”

“Noel said,” continued Jacinth, “that Oak Pixiekin was so very strong, and that Chestnut Pixiekin was so very clever.”

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“ And Willow Pixiekin was so kind,” said Betty.

“ And that they were little, like the fairies always are,” added Jacinth. “ I wish I could see them!”

“ But Noel said,” Betty reminded her, “ that Chestnut Pixiekin told him that people could only see them in the moonlight, unless some wonderful magic helped them.”

“ I wish I knew what the magic was,” said Jacinth. “ But Noel says he thinks we shall see them some time, if we always look for them, whenever we go into Pixie Woods.”

Then the two girls grew very thoughtful again, as they watched the little showers that were going over the trees where the land met the sky, although the mists were still lingering in the valley, as if they hated to go over the trees into the town.

But Jacinth was not smiling and laughing as she usually was. She was very quiet, and was looking very serious, as she watched all that was happening on the side of the big hill, and in the valley, and in the fields beyond. Then she looked at Pixie Woods

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again, where every leaf was so bright and shiny, and the whole green wood looked so cheerful, and then a big tear ran down her cheek.

“ Oh, Mother! ” all at once Jacinth exclaimed. “ I wish Grandmother could come and stay with us while Aunt Esther is away. It is so beautiful now in the valley, and the garden, and in Pixie Woods. Don’t you think she could if she only tried? ”

“ I’m afraid not, dear,” Mother replied. “ You know if she went away, too, there wouldn’t be any one to water the flower-bed, or feed the little young chickens, and care for Kittycat. So I fear she must stay at home till Aunt Esther comes back. But just think how nice it is that she wants you to go and stay with her! And how much you will be able to help her while you are there! And you will be so busy taking care of her that the whole month will go before you know it! ”

“ I love to go to Grandmother’s in the winter,” said Jacinth, rather slowly. “ Then all the stores have such pretty things in the windows, and the

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streets are so brightly lighted. Besides, Grandmother has such big fires burning, where we can roast chestnuts and apples. Oh, it's lovely then. But the streets are so narrow, and there isn't any breeze now. There are no fields and woods to run in, and no one to play with. There are no bees, or birds, or butterflies, even, round Grandmother's flower-bed. Now Pixie Woods are all coming into bloom ——” and another big tear ran slowly down Jacinth's cheek, as her lips trembled.

Then Betty hugged Bettina close to her, and whispered in her ear that she was sorry Jacinth was to be away all that whole month. Then she nestled against Jacinth, and whispered to her, “Bettina is awfully sorry you are going, Jacinth,” and Jacinth kissed both of them.

“Well, well,” said Mother, “it will be just as beautiful here when you and Grandmother come back next month, after Aunt Esther gets home. While you are there you must take such good care of Grandmother's little garden, that it will be as bright as Pixie Woods itself. Now that the showers seem to be over, I won-

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der if you couldn't find some wild strawberries along the edge of the woods, for Noel's supper, Jacinth?"

"I think I know where there are some fine ones," declared Jacinth. "And perhaps I can find some of the wood-strawberries that are ripe, as well."



"That will be nice," replied Mother. "We have not had any yet this season, and the flavor is finer than that of the pasture berries. Better wear your long cloak, so you will not get wet if there should be another shower. And you need not hurry, as there is

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plenty of time before supper. Perhaps Betty can find some of our own strawberries in the garden, besides."

"I'll look," said Betty, "while Jacinth's gone."

Jacinth put on her long cloak, that covered her all up, right down to the hem of her dress. It had a big round hood at the back, which she could pull up over her muslin cap, and she could tuck her two long yellow braids of hair inside it, so she could keep quite dry even if she was caught in a shower. Noel always called it her Little-Red-Riding-Hood cloak, because it was such a bright red, and looked so big and comfortable. Then she found the basket that she always took when she was going to look for strawberries, and Betty came and tucked a little package of cookies in it.

"Good-by, Mother," she called as she started down the path, to look for the strawberries that grew beside it. "Good-by, Betty."

"Good-by," called Betty. "Bettina and I will be watching for you."

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“Do not hurry,” her mother called after her.
“You have plenty of time.”

Jacynth went half-way down the hill. Then she turned in toward the woods, quite near the group of



big rocks where Noel had seen the Pixiekins that winter night in the moonlight.

When she came near the rocks, she looked all round very carefully, and walked very softly and quietly.

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She stooped down to look under the leaves of the hazel-bushes that grew there, for she always hoped that she might see some of the Pixie Fairies, if she looked carefully enough. Or, if she did not see them, perhaps she might hear them whispering, and possibly singing, as Noel had done before he really saw them.

But to-day the wind kept blowing in sharp little gusts, and made the hazel twigs bend and twist, and the leaves flutter and knock against each other. It even caught Jacinth's long red cloak and twisted it round her.

"It is too windy to-day for the Pixiekins to come out on the path, I am sure," said Jacinth to herself. "But I do wish I could see them!"

Just beyond the rocks there was a patch of wild strawberries that Jacinth knew about. They were fine, big, strong plants, that she had already gathered many berries from. When she gently separated the leaves, there were the scarlet berries, and every plant still had growing, right among the berries, the round

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white flowers, with their orange-colored stamens just covered with pollen, waiting for the bees and flies to come and take it.

As Jacinth picked all the ripe berries, the flies and honey-bees buzzed and hummed all round her. A black-and-yellow butterfly came and floated overhead, then went and settled on the very first spray of wild-carrot flower that had opened. The flat-topped blossom made a nice resting-place for her, while she sucked the nectar from each tiny floweret.

Then a gust of wind came again and blew the leaves together, making the twigs of the hazel-bushes rattle against each other. It almost blew Jacinth's muslin cap off, and twisted her red cloak round and round her, and made the spray of wild-carrot flower sway so much that the black-and-yellow butterfly had to jump off and go and settle on a tree-trunk, where she was sheltered.

"You bright black-and-yellow butterfly!" Jacinth exclaimed. "The wind does push you about, doesn't it?" And the butterfly opened and shut her wings

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as if she was answering Jacinth, and the honey-bees gave a deep, gruff hum, as if they were answering her, too.

“Noel always says the bees, and flies, and butterflies, and birds, and animals are the Pixiekins’ messengers, and if they like us, the Pixiekins will like us, too,” said Jacinth.

“Hum-m, hum-m, hum-m,” agreed the honey-bees. And the black-and-yellow butterfly opened and shut her wings again, as if she was quite sure of it, too.

But when Jacinth had picked all the berries that were ripe, she only had a very few in her basket.

“Perhaps,” she said to herself, “I can find some of the wood-strawberries ripe in Pixie Woods. I think I will try.”

So she picked up her basket and entered the woods by a little narrow foot-path that wound round and round among the big trees, and in and out through the bushes. Sometimes the path lay in the shadow, and sometimes, where there was more space between the trees, in the warm summer sunshine, which made



And he went up higher and higher.

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each rain-drop that still clung to the fern fronds glisten and shine like a tiny rainbow.

There, at the roots of a big tree, was a patch of the wood-strawberries. Jacinth knelt down among them, and pushed the leaves apart, and there were clusters of the berries, some tiny green ones and some big green ones, and a few red ones just ready to pick.

As Jacinth picked the ripe berries, the flies and honey-bees buzzed and hummed about her, and all over the strawberry-plants. And the black-and-yellow butterfly seemed to have gone into the woods with her, and came and fluttered and bobbed all over the strawberry-plants, to find some of the round, white flowers that were scattered everywhere between the berries.

Presently a black-and-golden bumblebee came, too, with a deep, deep hum, and flew round and round. Then he seemed to think of something else, perhaps of more interest, for he flew round and round in a circle, and went up and up and up, higher and higher, till he was above the tops of the trees. Then he flew

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away in a straight line, right towards the center of Pixie Woods.

When Bumblebee had gone, Jacinth finished picking all the strawberries that were ripe. Then she looked in her basket again.

“Well,” she said as she looked at them, “there will be just a very little dish of berries for Noel’s supper, but there will not be any for Mother, or Betty, or me, unless I find some more.”

As she was wondering where to look next, she noticed the little foot-path that went twisting and turning in and out among the trees and the bushes until it was hidden, but looked as if it ran right into the very center of Pixie Woods. It seemed, as she looked at it, as if all the tall ferns, and the blue iris, and the wild geraniums beckoned her to come, and follow the little path.

“There,” said Jacinth, “perhaps there will be more strawberries further along. I’m just going to follow the foot-path, ever and ever so far, right into Pixie Woods.”

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As she went along, sometimes through the shadows, then again through the sunlight, all the wild flowers, and ferns, and bushes nodded their welcome to her. The robins and the orioles piped a welcome, too, and



presently she saw a big, fat, gray squirrel, who seemed to be coming to meet her along the little foot-path, just where it turned round a barberry bush, that was covered with yellow blossoms, all golden in the sunlight.

When Jacinth came near, Gray Squirrel just flicked her bushy tail, and turned round and scuttled

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down the little foot-path in front of her. Then she scampered up a tree-trunk and round it, so her head just showed on the further side. Her bright black eyes twinkled and snapped as she watched Jacinth come almost up to her. Then she jumped down again, and along the path, just as if she was showing Jacinth the way.

Jacinth followed Gray Squirrel, and listened to the birds' songs, and tried to see them as they flitted from tree to tree on each side of the foot-path. She began to feel so happy that she quite forgot that she was to leave it all to-morrow, and go to her grandmother's house in the town, with its tall houses, and narrow little streets, and big chimneys, that were always throwing out a cloud of smoke.

She listened to the leaves rustling, and sometimes a twig snapping, as a wood-mouse scampered over it. She watched the birds so busy and happy, and felt as if all the world was a place to play and sing and be happy in, and that no one ever worked or worried, or ever did anything they didn't want to. So, as she

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followed Gray Squirrel along the little foot-path as it ran right into Pixie Woods, she forgot every troublesome thought, and laughed to herself, and sang as she went.

The woods grew thicker and thicker, and presently she came to a very big tree. It was the very largest tree in the whole of Pixie Woods. As the sun was shining, of course it looked just like a big tree to Jacinth. She did not know that it really was the front door of the Pixiekin Fairies' house.

This tree had great roots spreading out on each side of it. One of them twisted round, and went straight across the trunk, so it made a step.

"It looks just as if that was a door-step," said Jacinth as she looked at the big tree and the curious root. "Just like the door-step of somebody's house," she said aloud, and she sat down on this step to rest awhile.

Gray Squirrel had found a little bunch of blackberries that were just beginning to turn red on one side, the very first of the season. She came and sat



Oh! I'm only Jacinth," she said.

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opposite Jacinth and ate them, and her bright black eyes snapped and twinkled.

Then Jacinth opened her basket, and took out the packet of cookies that Betty had put in there for her. She ate one of them as she listened to the bees humming, and the birds singing. She watched the butterflies flashing through the sunlight, and thought how beautiful it all was, and how happy everything was, now the showers were over.

“Too-hoo! Too-hoo! Too-hoo!” suddenly rang out, just over Jacinth’s head. She looked up, right into the great, round, yellow eyes of a big brown owl, who was sitting on a branch of the tree, right over the door-step.

“Too-hoo! Too-hoo!” he called. To Jacinth it sounded like, “Who are you? Who are you?”

“Oh, I’m only Jacinth,” she answered hurriedly; for he did look at her so very steadily, as if she had no business to be sitting on the door-step of the Pixiekins’ front door.

“Too-hoo! Too-hoo!” he said in a much milder

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tone. It sounded to Jacinth just as if he said, "That will do! That will do!" Then he settled his head well back into his feathers, and closed one great, round, yellow eye. Then he closed the other eye, and looked as if he was fast asleep again.

While Jacinth and big Brown Owl were talking to each other, Gray Squirrel chattered, and chattered, and chattered, as if she was explaining something. Jacinth thought Brown Owl looked at Gray Squirrel as if he understood what she was saying.

Jacinth ate another cookie, but she looked up at Brown Owl every little while. He seemed to be fast asleep, and not even to know that she was still there.

When Gray Squirrel had eaten her berries, she jumped up, and flicked her bushy tail, and ran down the foot-path a little way. Then she stopped and looked back at Jacinth, as if she was saying, "Come along, I'm waiting for you." Then it seemed just as if all the grasses, and ferns, and blue iris, and wild geraniums, all nodded and beckoned to her to come along the little foot-path.

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“Yes,” said Jacinth, getting up and picking up her basket. “Yes, I’m coming. I’m going to follow the foot-path ever and ever so far, right into Pixie Woods.”



“Huite-toit! Huite-toit!” said Brown Owl quite softly and gently. Jacinth thought he said, “Quite right! Quite right!” and when she looked up at him

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once more, he had opened just one great, round yellow eye, and was watching her go along the path.

Now, while Jacinth had stopped to pick the wood-strawberries, just after she came into Pixie Woods, there was a very serious conference going on, right in the middle of the woods. All the Pixie Fairies, and Bumblebee, and Gray Squirrel, and the little old Lady, who was the Spirit of the Spring, were there.

The spring in the middle of the big rock came up from the very center of the world. It poured out the clearest, sweetest, coldest water that ever was known. But it had been bubbling, and boiling, and gurgling, and grumbling, and making a dreadful fuss, as if the little old Lady, who lived in the very middle of it, was very angry about something.

Now the Pixiekins, who were very busy, kept hearing the bubbling, and boiling, and gurgling, and grumbling, as they were working beside Crystal Pool, in the very center of Pixie Woods. They had wondered all day what was annoying the little old Lady of the Spring. At last Chestnut Pixiekin, who was



She was poking and prodding at the sticks and leaves.

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very clever, said he would climb up the banks of the stream above Crystal Pool, and then up to the big rocks, and try to find out if he could, just what the trouble was.

As he scrambled up the rocks, at the edge of the pool, and along the side of the stream where the water ran from the spring to Crystal Pool, he caught sight of the little old Lady of the Spring herself. With her long, crystal-headed walking-stick she was poking and prodding at the sticks and leaves that had fallen into the stream's channel. He noticed that she was looking very angry, and was talking to herself. Then, as he got nearer, he could hear what she was saying.

“This is dreadful! Dreadful!” declared the little old Lady of the Spring, poking at some of the dead leaves, and sticks, and glowing green moss, that prevented the water from getting along the channel of the little stream.

Usually Crystal Pool lay still, and quiet, and calm. Now it had energetic ripples all over its surface, from

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the force of the water from the spring, as it had to fight its way along, instead of flowing in gently, as it always had done.

“Those Pixiekins have forgotten to clear the channel!” declared the little old Lady of the Spring. “And they have left sticks, and stones, and leaves, and moss, all the way down to Crystal Pool. I suppose they expect me to clear it. Dreadful! Dreadful!” she exclaimed. Then she poked and prodded at the obstructions again, with the long, crystal-headed walking-stick that she carried.

At that moment Chestnut Pixiekin scrambled up the rocks on the other side of the stream, just opposite to the little old Lady of the Spring.

“Oh, there you are at last!” she exclaimed indignantly. “At last! Just look at all those sticks, and stones, and leaves, and things, choking the channel of my stream! Is it any wonder that my spring is bubbling, and boiling, and gurgling, and grumbling, when it has to fight all these things?”

“Oh, Lady of the Spring!” said Chestnut. “I

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am so sorry that all those things have got in the way. We have had so much to do this spring, that we have not been up here."

"I should think not!" snapped the little old Lady of the Spring. "Not been up here, indeed! And where do you suppose the water is coming from to fill Crystal Pool, for all the pond-lilies? and how will the brook beyond be filled, where the frogs, and fish, and young dragon-flies live, if the stream is all choked up? Don't you hear how my spring is boiling, and bubbling, and gurgling, and grumbling, just because it can't get along?"

Chestnut was down on his hands and knees by this time, pulling out the sticks and stones, to let the water through.

"And just think of it!" she continued. "Here it is the very first of June, and the Pond-Lily Festival will begin to-morrow! Nothing has been cleared up for it! How is it, you Pixiekins are not taking care of Crystal Pool for the festival?"

"We can't get our water-boots finished, Lady of

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the Spring,” explained Chestnut. “We are working at them just as hard as we can. But all day long the wind has blown in gusts. It has scattered the leaves, and knocked the looms over, and broken the spiders’ threads, and we are nowhere near done. I don’t know what we are going to do.”

“Well! well! well!” exclaimed the little old Lady of the Spring. “Perhaps I was too cross! But when we grow old, everybody neglects us! They are all thinking of themselves and their own pleasures, and we older ones do not matter. All you Pixiekins are thinking of nowadays is your little young friends, like New Year. But a fresh New Year comes every twelve moons. I have seen many New Years, and they are very much alike in the long run. Some of them are bright and pleasant, and others are dull and stupid. But my Spring and I have been here since the beginning. Without us, Pixie Woods could not have grown. The water, and air, and sunshine were necessary.”

“We really did not mean to neglect you, Lady of

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the Spring!” explained Chestnut. “Indeed, we did not!”

“Well! well! well!” declared the little old Lady of the Spring. “Perhaps not! perhaps not! But you ought to get your water-boots made on time, so you



could clear up Crystal Pool. All my children, the pond-lilies, are putting up their buds now. Many of the yellow ones are already open. The white ones will begin to open to-morrow. The first of the pink

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ones will come in a few days. Yet the dead leaves are not gathered up, or the edges of the pool cleared. Why are you neglecting my children?"

"It is because the wind has blown so hard all day," replied Chestnut. "We cannot get the water-boots finished."

Just then another gust of wind swept across Crystal Pool and the clear space beyond it.

"There!" declared Chestnut. "Just look how it is blowing all the leaves away again. Every Pixiekin has to leave off work to go and catch them!" And he and the little old Lady of the Spring stood high up on the rocks, and watched all the Pixiekins running about to catch a lot of green arrowhead lily-leaves, and bring them back to the neat little piles they had been arranged in.

Then they saw a little group of Pixiekins gather together, over by the hazel-bushes, that grew right round the big oak tree, just as if they were discussing something.

Gray Squirrel came out of the woodpecker's hole,

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high up in the oak tree where she had her nest, and her baby squirrels. She sat on a branch near the group of Pixiekins, as if she was helping to make some plan.

Then Sassafras Pixiekin, who was the very smallest Pixiekin of all, and not of very much use when there was any work to be done, climbed up the oak tree, and seemed to be talking to the baby squirrels inside the nest. Then Gray Squirrel jumped down to the ground, and galloped through the bushes and the tall grass, and along the little foot-path, as hard as she could, till she went round the bend by the sumac bushes, and out of sight.

“ I wonder what they are planning to do,” the little old Lady of the Spring remarked.

“ I think Gray Squirrel must be going to get something,” Chestnut replied. “ But here comes Willow Pixiekin to tell us all about it.”

They saw Willow Pixiekin, with all the long, narrow, willow-leaves round the edge of his tunic, flying out like fringe, come running across the clear space

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beyond Crystal Pool. He scrambled up the rocks, where the stream ran into the pool. Then he jumped and scrambled from rock to rock, right up to where Chestnut and the little old Lady of the Spring were waiting for him.



“ Oh, Chestnut,—and Lady of the Spring,” panted Willow, as he caught sight of the dignified little old Lady of the Spring, with her white cap, and long, crystal-headed walking-stick. “ Bumblebee just came to us, and said that Jacinth, Noel’s sister, was

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at the edge of the woods, picking strawberries. Gray Squirrel has gone to get her, for she is sure that Jacinth will help us stop the wind blowing.”

“But how will Gray Squirrel make her come?” asked the little old Lady of the Spring.



“And how will she stop the wind blowing?” demanded Chestnut.

“Oh, I don’t know how they’ll do it,” explained Willow. “But Gray Squirrel said she was sure

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Jacinth would come, and that she would know how to stop the wind blowing, when she got here."

"But Jacinth cannot see us in the daylight," said Chestnut. "And she cannot hear us either, so how will she know we are here?"

"Oh, I don't know that," replied Willow. "But Gray Squirrel said she was sure it would come out all right. She has gone to get Jacinth. Sassafras Pixiekin is up in the oak tree, playing with the baby Gray Squirrels till their mother comes back. Oh, I'm sure it will come out all right!"

"Hum," said the little old Lady of the Spring. "Hum—Ha—Of course there are the hazel-wands."

"Hazel-wands?" asked Chestnut. "How would they help?"

"Why, the hazel-bush has magic powers, you know, particularly in Pixie Woods," replied the little old Lady of the Spring. "Whenever people want to find the right place to dig a well, and be sure to find water, they balance a forked hazel twig on their fingers. When they walk over the right spot, the

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hazel-wand dips down, down, and points to the ground. They call them ‘divining-rods.’ ”

“ But how will they help us? ” asked Chestnut.

“ I don’t quite know,” the Lady of the Spring re-



plied. “ But, perhaps if Jacinth held one of them, it might help somehow, but I don’t know how.”

“ Oh! ” declared Willow. “ Gray Squirrel said it was sure to come out all right.”

“ There’s Gray Squirrel now! ” said Chestnut,

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pointing to the sumac bushes. “He’s coming along the little foot-path. And look! She’s stopping and looking back! Just as if some one else is coming, too!”

As they watched for a moment, Jacinth came round the bend in the little foot-path, just where the sumacs grew. She was laughing and singing to herself, as she followed Gray Squirrel. She seemed very happy.

Gray Squirrel raced along in front of her, until she came to another tree, which she climbed up a little way. Then she looked back at Jacinth, round the other side of the tree-trunk. When Jacinth came up to the tree, Gray Squirrel jumped down with a flick of her bushy tail, and ran along the foot-path again. Jacinth laughed, and skipped along, too.

When Jacinth came near the group of big rocks, where the Spring was, in the very center of Pixie Woods, she heard the Spring bubbling, and boiling, and gurgling, and grumbling, as it forced its way among the sticks and leaves and moss that were choking up its channel.



She pulled the sticks and stones out of the channel.

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Jacinth stopped a moment, and looked up at the rocks where the spring was, as if she also wondered what it was making such a noise about.

“Why,” exclaimed Jacinth, “this must be the spring where Noel heard the Pixie Fairies singing. I wonder what it makes such a noise for?”

Then she left the little foot-path, and climbed up the rocks and the bank that surrounded the spring and its channel, that led down to Crystal Pool. But the sun was shining, so she could not see the little old Lady of the Spring, and Chestnut, and Willow Pixiekin, who were standing there. She thought that she was quite alone, with Gray Squirrel watching her.

“Poor little spring!” said Jacinth, setting her basket, with the few strawberries in it, down on one of the big stones. “Its channel is all filled up with sticks and things, and the water can’t get along. That’s why it’s making such a noise!”

Jacinth stepped from rock to rock, and almost knocked against the little old Lady of the Spring,

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who had to step hurriedly on one side, to get out of her way. Then Jacinth stooped down and began to pull the sticks, and stones, and leaves, out of the channel, so the water could creep along a little farther.

“Dear! Dear!” the little old Lady of the Spring exclaimed. “Bless the child! She’s as blind as blind can be! She can’t see anything but the sticks and stones, and misses all the bigger things about her!”

“But she’s very kind-hearted,” said Willow. “Just see how she’s pulling all the things out of the way!”

“I know!” said the little old Lady of the Spring. “But I wish she would do something more worth while.”

“Perhaps she will presently,” said Chestnut, “if we give her time. If she sees the little sticks and stones now, and is willing to help get them out of the way, possibly it will help her to see the more important things by and by. Then she will know how to deal with them.”

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“I’ll tell her,” said Gray Squirrel, who sat in an alder bush, eating some buttercup-seeds that she had picked as she came along. “She can see me, although she cannot see you. And she can hear me, too, but she doesn’t understand what I say very well.”

Then Gray Squirrel leaned out of the alder bush toward Jacinth, and chattered, and chattered, and chattered, till Jacinth left off clearing the channel of the stream, and looked at her, and laughed happily.

“You funny little Gray Squirrel!” she said. “You look just as if you were trying to tell me something. But I’m afraid I don’t understand squirrel language very well. But we are giving the stream a chance to get through, down to the pool, aren’t we?”

Gray Squirrel chattered, and chattered. And when Jacinth went along a little farther, and pulled out some more sticks and stones, just where the water plunged down into the pool, Gray Squirrel went too, and so did the little old Lady of the Spring, and Chestnut, and Willow Pixiekin. Jacinth could not

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see them, however, but thought she and Gray Squirrel were all alone beside the Spring and Crystal Pool.

“There, Gray Squirrel,” said Jacinth. “Now the water can get along. It will be able to clear the rest of the things away itself.”

Jacinth stepped from rock to rock, till she came down to the edge of Crystal Pool itself. She stopped to look at it.

The Pool lay so still and quiet, in the very heart of Pixie Woods. The ripples that had been all over its surface from the force of the water that had come into it, as it had fought its way from the spring, between the sticks and stones, were dying away, now that it had room to flow along gently, as it always had done.

In places the water looked the purest blue, just the color of the summer sky above. In other places it was a shining, emerald-green, just the color of the leaves of the trees where the sun shone on them. And in other places it was a dark, dark green, just the color of the trees where they were in shadow.

All over the surface of the pool were lily-pads, and

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some lily-buds were just peeping up, like round, green balls. Along the edge were great patches of arrowhead lilies, with their long spikes of buds, and in places the first of their white flowers were open.

“If we could only make her see and hear,” said



Chestnut Pixiekin to Willow, and the little old Lady of the Spring, and the other Pixiekins who had now joined them, and were watching Jacinth, “I think she might find some way to help us. But how can we make her see and hear?”

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“ I’m sure she will hear and see, too, when the right time comes,” said Willow. “ Just wait! Gray Squirrel said it would be all right! Didn’t you? ”

“ Of course,” said Gray Squirrel. “ Of course it’ll be all right.”

Jacinth had been looking at Crystal Pool, with all the pond-lily buds ready to open. She watched the hazel-bushes that surrounded the clear space of grass beyond the pool, and saw the tall blueberry bushes beyond them again, swing and sway in the gusts of wind. Now she looked all around her, as if searching for something.

“ It sounds just as if there were a lot of bees humming,” she said to herself. “ But I don’t see them anywhere.”

“ Oh, Chestnut! ” said Willow excitedly. “ She’s beginning to hear something. Perhaps she will be able to see us presently.”

A lot more of the Pixiekins had left their work, and had joined Chestnut and Willow. They were standing all around Jacinth, watching her. But she

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could not see them at all, and thought she and Gray Squirrel were all alone beside Crystal Pool.

“Let’s sing the Wood Song,” said Chestnut. “Perhaps she will be able to hear us better, if we sing.”

“Why, there it is again,” said Jacinth, as she looked all around her. Then she looked up in the trees, and up at the spring among the big rocks, and up at the blue summer sky, and all around the grass again.

“Isn’t that beautiful, Gray Squirrel?” said Jacinth. “It sounds just like music on silver bells. Now it’s growing louder, and louder,—and —— Why, there almost seems to be words in it”:

“With sunshine, and wind, and rain,
Our Woodland green grows bright,
And we bring the power,
At the helping hour,
To hope till you find the light.”

“I never heard anything like that before,” said Jacinth. Then she turned round and round, as she

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looked at the trees, and then at the spring, and then at the sky, and then at the grass all around her, while Gray Squirrel chattered and chattered, as if she was trying to explain something.

“There, it’s coming again,” said Jacinth. . “Listen,—just listen.” And she stood quite still, so she would not miss the slightest sound. “There, it’s growing louder, and louder. Now the words are coming again”:

“To those who have eyes to see,
We come and lead the way,
That every flower
May bring forth the power
To trust till the break of day.”

Then it died away again.

“I never heard anything like that,” said Jacinth. “Perhaps it’s the birds,—or the crickets. Mother said some people think the butterflies make a noise, but that we cannot hear them. I should think, if they could sing, it would sound just like that.”

“She can hear it,” declared Chestnut.

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“Perhaps she will really be able to see presently,” said the little old Lady of the Spring.

Just then a very strong gust of wind swept through the hazel-bushes and across the open space, and over Crystal Pool itself. It blew, and blew. It caught



Jacinth's muslin cap and almost pulled it off, and it made her long cloak flap, and flap, and twist all around her.

Then she noticed a strange thing. Over by the hazel-bushes there were little heaps of arrowhead



There were rows and rows of spiders.

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leaves,—fresh green leaves, and all arranged in neat little piles. When the wind blew so hard, it caught the leaves up, and tossed them about, and scattered them all over the grass.

In a few moments the leaves all went back again, and again they were placed in neat little piles, and it looked as if a stone dropped on one, and a little stick dropped on another.

Presently the wind came again, and once more the leaves were scattered, and again they came together again in piles.

“Isn’t that queer!” said Jacinth to herself. “I never saw leaves go and lay down in piles before!”

Then Jacinth went over toward the hazel-bushes, and just beside where the big oak tree grew, and sheltered the bushes a little from the wind, there were rows and rows of spiders, all spinning threads of silk from the branches of the hazel-bushes down to the ground.

There were big ones, and little ones, brown ones and black ones, and some striped ones, and some plain

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yellow ones. Each one was busy spinning a thread of silk from the twig to the ground. Then he seemed to break it off, and run as fast as he could over the grass, and up the stem of the hazel-bush, and out on a branch. Then he jumped off, and spun another silken thread.

“Isn’t that queer!” exclaimed Jacinth. “I never saw so many spiders all together before! Just as if they were all working together! This seems a very queer place!”

Gray Squirrel leaned out of the oak tree just then, and chattered, and chattered, just as if she was trying to explain something about what the spiders were doing. Jacinth drew nearer and nearer, to watch the spiders, and to try and make out what they were doing.

She caught hold of a branch of one of the hazel-bushes. In her eagerness to see just what they were doing, she leaned over farther and farther, keeping her balance by the aid of the hazel twig that she had grasped. Without thinking about it, and all at once,

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the stone she had stepped upon rolled a little, and the hazel twig snapped off in her hand. She caught hold of another branch to save herself from falling. Then she stood up, and looked all around her, still holding in her hand the forked hazel twig that had broken off so easily.

She looked, and looked, and looked. Then she rubbed her eyes, as if she could not believe what she saw.

“ Oh! ” exclaimed Jacinth, and she just sat down upon the stone she had been standing on. “ Oh, my goodness! ”

It was no wonder that she was surprised. For instead of being all alone in the very middle of Pixie Woods, beside Crystal Pool, with all the pond-lily buds ready to open, and with the rows and rows of spiders all spinning silken threads among the hazel-bushes, and Gray Squirrel leaning out of the big oak tree, and chattering, and chattering, as if she was trying to explain something, there before her very eyes were all the Pixiekin Fairies themselves.

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“Hold on to the hazel-wand, Jacinth!” Chestnut Pixiekin exclaimed, fairly jumping up and down with excitement in front of her. “It must be the hazel-wand that makes you able to see and hear us. The Lady of the Spring said it might help somehow.”

Jacinth looked at the forked twig in her hand, then back at Chestnut.

“This?” she asked.

“Yes,” replied Chestnut. “The hazels are magic bushes, you know, in Pixie Woods. It must be that which has made you able to see and hear us. We’ve been trying to make you see, ever since you helped the Lady of the Spring by clearing the channel of the stream.”

“I didn’t know that I was helping anybody,” said Jacinth.

“That’s just it!” Willow Pixiekin joined in from where he was working. “We never can tell. We think, perhaps, that we are only doing something because we want to, and then we find out we are helping somebody more than any one else in the world could

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do. Oh! we help a whole lot, when we just move the sticks and stones, even though we can't see a bit of what is around us!"

But Jacinth was looking now at the scene before her, in the clear space beside Crystal Pool. There were rows and rows of Pixiekins working. Some of them were sitting on stones, just the right height, with piles of fresh green arrowhead leaves beside them, and each was stitching away with two needles, just as a cobbler sews a shoe. Then there were a lot of looms, where other Pixiekins were weaving long strips of the finest, most delicate kind of cobwebby ribbon.

There were still other Pixiekins who were winding bobbins to put on the looms, and winding shuttles to keep the shuttle-baskets filled for each worker.

Others were winding silken threads onto big spools. Some of these spools were full of big strong threads, others full of very fine threads, and all sorts of sizes between.

Still other Pixiekins gathered arrowhead leaves at

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the edge of the pool, and carried great loads of them to those who were working.

“ Oh, I have wanted to see the Pixiekin Fairies so much!” declared Jacinth. “ Ever since Noel heard them singing by the spring, last summer, and more and more ever since he really saw them last winter.”

“ And we have wanted you to see us, too,” explained Chestnut. “ And we have been following you, and talking to you, and singing to you, ever since Gray Squirrel brought you here.”

“ You must be Chestnut Pixiekin, I am sure,” said Jacinth, “ that Noel has told me so much about.”

“ Yes,” replied Chestnut. “ And that is Willow who is weaving at that loom. And that is Oak who is sewing over there.”

Jacinth looked from one to the other, and then she said, “ I feel just as if I have always known you. Noel has told me so much about you.”

“ And that is Sassafras,” went on Chestnut, “ who is helping the big spider, over at the end of the row.”

Then Jacinth noticed that the spiders who were

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spinning threads among the hazel-bushes were not alone, as she had thought they were, but each spider had several Pixiekins waiting upon him.

Some helped to steady the silken thread, so the leaves and twigs would not blow against it and break it. Others cut it off when the spider reached the ground, and started to run up the hazel-bush stem to begin another thread. Others carried the finished threads to those who were winding them on spools.

“I never saw so many spiders before,” declared Jacinth. “And I didn’t know there were so many different-colored ones in the whole world.”

Just then the wind came again, blowing through the hazel-bushes, and right across the smooth piece of grass where the Pixiekins were working. The spiders who were spinning swung and swayed, so they had to cling to the silken threads. The Pixiekins who were helping them had to run from one to the other, to help steady the threads, and keep them clear of all the leaves and grass that were being blown into them and threatening to break them.

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The neat little piles of arrowhead leaves, that were each placed conveniently for a group of Pixiekin workers, were blown all over the grass, right out to the edge of Crystal Pool. Some of them even went into the water, where the Pixiekins were having a hard time to get them again.

“O dear!” exclaimed Chestnut Pixiekin, who had stayed beside Jacinth while she was looking at all the others working. “O dear! There’s the wind again! It blows everything all over the place. It keeps us all chasing the leaves, and helping the spiders to keep their threads from breaking. And the Pixiekins who are working have to leave off and help straighten things out. I don’t know when we shall be done! O dear!”

And he hurried away to help catch some of the leaves, and bring them back, and try to get them into a pile again beside Oak Pixiekin. Then he had to hurry over to Willow, whose loom had blown over, and they both had to pull and tug, in order to set it up again.

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“Oh, Chestnut and Oak!” called some of the Pixiekins who were helping the spiders. “Oh, come quick! quick!! The wind has tangled Brownie’s thread all up, and it’ll break! Come over here! Quick!!!”

Chestnut and Oak Pixiekin both ran as hard as they could, to one of the big brown spiders, who was dangling helplessly at the end of his thread. The thread had blown over another twig, and three Pixiekins were holding it up as well as they could, to prevent the twig breaking it.

Chestnut and Oak ran to Spider Brownie’s aid. They each took hold of two legs on each side, and lifted him over the obstructing twig, so that the silken thread again hung clear.

Chestnut Pixiekin picked up a stone as large as he could carry, and brought it over and laid it on the pile of leaves near Jacinth.

“We should have had them all made by sunset,” he said to Jacinth. “But the wind has come just like that all day, and has prevented us working. We are

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not nearly finished, and the festival begins to-morrow at noon! We have been so delayed, I don't know what we are going to do!"

"What are you making?" asked Jacinth. "And what is the festival?"



"Why, the Pond-Lily Festival," replied Chestnut, looking at her in surprise that she did not know all about it. "Didn't you see all the round buds, almost ready to open, on Crystal Pool?"

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“Why, yes,” said Jacinth doubtfully. “I saw the buds, but I didn’t know there was a festival.”

“There always is, in Pixie Woods,” explained Chestnut. “When the big white lilies open, and the yellow ones are all in bloom, and the pink ones will come in a day or two, why the whole woods rejoice. Then, there is so much to do, while that is on. We show the bees and butterflies where there is the most nectar to make honey from. We point out the blossoms with the finest pollen, to be distributed to the others, so they can grow nice big seeds. Then we have to keep the dead leaves cleared up, and to help the new buds to open. Oh, we are very busy when the Pond-Lily Festival begins, and it makes it very hard, when we cannot get ready on time.”

“What are you making, that you cannot get finished?” asked Jacinth.

“Why, our water-boots,” explained Chestnut. “We must have the water-boots, so we can get around among the lilies.”

“Water-boots?” said Jacinth in wonder.



Jacinth sat on the rock beside the oak tree.

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“Yes,” said Chestnut. “Just the same as people have snow-shoes, so they can walk on the snow. We make water-boots so we can walk on the water.”

“I am afraid I do not know anything about water-boots,” said Jacinth. “Although I know Noel has some snow-shoes.”

“The water-boots,” explained Chestnut, “are made from nice, green, arrowhead lily-leaves. They are just the right shape. Then Willow and his helpers are weaving bands that go round the heel, and across the toe, from spiders’ silk. And Oak and his helpers are sewing it onto the leaves, with the silken threads. That’s why we need different-sized threads. And so spiders of all the different kinds come and spin for us. Some of them make very strong threads, and others very fine ones. O dear! There’s the wind again!”

A rustling among the leaves at the top of the oak tree was the first sign of the returning gust of wind. Chestnut ran over to Willow Pixiekin, to help steady the loom, and prevent it blowing over again.

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Many of the other Pixiekins ran to the hazel-bushes to help the spiders, while all the others did their best to hold the leaves down, and prevent them from blowing away.

Then the wind came in short, sharp gusts, sweeping across the grass, and right over Crystal Pool. 'As the bushes began to sway and swing, and the leaves to drive before the wind, it almost blew Jacinth's muslin cap off. It made her long, red cloak flap and flap, and twist all around her. So, to keep her cloak still, she caught hold of one end of it, and, resting her hand on a low-growing branch of the oak tree, she held it straight out. As she held it so, it quite sheltered all the spiders, who were spinning in the hazel-bushes, and the wind never troubled them at all.

"Oh, Jacinth!" Oak called out to her. "That is fine! That is just what we need! Your cloak quite shuts off the wind, and helps us more than you can guess!"

"Why, I'll sit here, and hold it out," declared Jacinth. "I never thought that would help. But

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I've been wishing that I knew of something that would."

"Gray Squirrel said she knew you would find some way to help," said Chestnut.

So Jacinth sat on the rock beside the oak tree, and rested her hand on one of its branches that grew out almost straight, but dipped down toward the ground, just at the end.

"That will be very comfortable," said Jacinth, as she leaned against the trunk of the oak tree. "And I can hold my cloak straight out, as I rest my hand on this branch."

"That branch is very useful," said Chestnut. "Gray Squirrel always comes down that when she is going to look for acorns on the ground. Then she does not have to jump over all the stones and rocks."

"We call it Gray Squirrel's bridge," said Oak.

"Now we shall call it Jacinth's wall," replied Chestnut. And Jacinth laughed happily, to think she could help.

"I am very glad I can help," she said.

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Just then the leaves on the top of the oak tree began to rustle, and the summer breeze came in little gusts again. It blew the leaves and the tops of all the tall blueberry bushes about, and whistled, and growled as it rushed overhead. Then it came a little lower down, and pulled and pulled at Jacinth's muslin cap. Then it pushed at her long, red cloak, as if it was trying to get it away from her.

"Hi, Pixiekin fellows!" shouted Chestnut. "Come over here and hold the edge of Jacinth's cloak down."

Chestnut caught hold of the lower corner, and several others came running just as hard as they could, and held it all along the ground.

"Pile some of the stones along its edge," directed Chestnut. And a lot more Pixiekins ran over and put several of the stones on the edge of the cloak, to help hold it down.

"That holds it well," said Jacinth. "Now the wind will not be able to trouble us again."

"When Bumblebee," began Willow, who was mov-

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ing his loom over near Jacinth, so he could get the shelter of her cloak, "When Bumblebee came and told us that you were in Pixie Woods, Gray Squirrel said that she would go and get you, because she knew you would help."

"I didn't feel sure of it," said Chestnut. "I knew you could not see us or hear us, and I never thought of the magic hazel-wands till the little old Lady of the Spring spoke of them. Then I didn't know just what they would do."

"But Gray Squirrel insisted upon going for you," Willow continued. "She couldn't very well spare the time, because the babies up in her nest are just getting big enough to crawl out, and they might fall if she didn't watch them. But Sassafras Pixiekin said he would sit on the branch outside the nest, and dangle some alder catkins in the hole for them to play with, while she was gone. So Gray Squirrel went for you."

"I should think she must have hated to leave them," said Jacinth, looking up at the oak tree, to the

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place where she could see Gray Squirrel's head peeping out at her.

“She's very kind,” said Willow. “And she will give up her own wishes any time to help us.”

Then Gray Squirrel leaned out of her hole up in the big oak tree, and chattered, and chattered. She seemed to be saying a whole lot of things to Willow, and both Willow and Chestnut laughed.

“She says,” remarked Willow, “that we do a lot for her, and that she would consider herself a very poor neighbor if she didn't do a little thing for us when she could.”

Oak, and all the Pixiekins who were helping him, moved over quite near Jacinth. And Chestnut and his helpers brought the piles of leaves, and arranged them around Jacinth's feet. Others brought the big spools of silk, so that all those winding the bobbins and the shuttles, and those who were threading the needles for the others that were sewing, could get the shelter of Jacinth's cloak as well.

Oak sat on a stone just the right height, and put

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his two needles in at once, one on each side, and pulled them out with a sharp little “tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack.” And a whole row of Pixiekins sat round him, sewing just the same way.

Then Willow’s loom went “slip-slap, slip-slap, slip-slap,” as he threw the shuttle through the threads, and the heddle pushed the weaving close together. And there were a whole group of Pixiekins right around him, some winding bobbins to put on the loom, and others winding shuttles, to put in the shuttle-basket, ready for him to use.

“I wish I could be here while the Pond-Lily Festival is being held,” all at once Jacinth said, as she watched the Pixiekins working so busily and happily. “But Grandmother wants me to go and stay with her all the rest of the month in the town, and it will be over when she and I come back.”

“But how good it is to be wanted,” said Chestnut. “You must be a very kind and helpful girl, Jacinth, that your grandmother looks to you to come and stay with her.”

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“ I’m afraid,” began Jacinth, and then she rather hesitated. “ I’m afraid I haven’t been at all kind this time, for I haven’t wanted to go.”

“ Why not? ” asked Willow.

“ I love to go to Grandmother’s in the winter,” said Jacinth. “ Although I love to be here, too. But then in the town in the winter-time there are all the stores, with such pretty things in their windows, and all so brightly lighted in the evening. And there are so many people in the streets. And at Grandmother’s there are the big fireplaces all burning, where we can roast apples and chestnuts, and we don’t seem to miss the birds and the woods so much. But in summer it’s so hot, and close, in the streets. The little garden has so few flowers, and the one pear tree never has a bird in it. And all the butterflies get lost before they get there. Oh, it’s nothing like Pixie Woods in the summer! ”

“ Can’t Grandmother come here and stay with you? ” asked Willow anxiously.

“ No,” replied Jacinth, “ because there wouldn’t be

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any one to take care of things till Aunt Esther comes home again. Betty isn't big enough to help much, if she went. And Mother has to take care of her and Noel, here at home, so I am the one who must go."

"It always seemed to me," said Chestnut, "that to be so useful and helpful that others want you, is one of the very finest things in the world. And I think, too, for any one to feel that others don't care for them, and that they are being neglected, is one of the worst things in the world."

"I am so sorry," said Willow, "that the little old Lady of the Spring felt that we were neglecting her because she was old. But when Jacinth cleared the sticks and stones away, she was very happy again."

"Did she feel so?" asked Jacinth, looking across Crystal Pool, where she could now see the little old Lady of the Spring, with her long, crystal-headed walking-stick, directing some of the Pixiekins about something they were doing among the lilies.

"Indeed she did," replied Chestnut. "And she was very serious about it, too."

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“ I’m so glad I cleared the sticks and stones away,” said Jacinth. “Although I had not got the magic hazel-wand then, so I could not see any of you. But I am very glad that I made her happier. I shouldn’t like Grandmother to think I did not care for her because she was old.”

“ Of course not,” said Willow. “ Of course not! Nobody would! ”

And Jacinth sat quite still for a little while, and watched the little old Lady of the Spring, who was so very busy on the other side of Crystal Pool, while all the other Pixiekins were working just as hard as they could.

“ Tick-tack, Tick-tack, Tick-tack,” went the needles and thread of all the Pixiekins who were sewing the water-boots, round Oak.

“ Slip-slap, Slip-slap, Slip-slap,” went the looms that Willow and his helpers were weaving upon. At the same time Gray Squirrel would come and sit on a branch of the oak tree, and chatter with pleasure, to see how well everything was going.

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“And Gray Squirrel,” said Jacinth all at once, “was willing to leave her babies, and go all the way along the little foot-path, to bring me here to help you?”

“Yes,” replied Willow. “And she’s always doing things like that for us. Just giving up what she wants to help somebody else. That’s why we think so much of her.”

“I’m glad I’m going to Grandmother’s to-morrow,” all at once declared Jacinth. “I wouldn’t have her think that I was neglecting her for anything. And I’m going to do all I can to help.”

“Jacinth has helped us to-day,” said Chestnut. “What can we do to help her?”

All the Pixiekins became very thoughtful.

“I’m going to coax Bumblebee to go and see her every day,” said Willow.

“And I’m going to ask Black-and-Yellow Butterfly to go every day,” said Oak. “And I’m going to leave a flower on Noel’s door-step every morning,” said Chestnut. “He can take it to Jacinth in the

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town, when he goes to work. Then Jacinth will know we are thinking of her, and are watching for her to come back to us."

"I know Noel will bring it to me," said Jacinth.

"Noel is a great friend of ours," said Willow. "We are very proud of him, he is so steady and strong. I wish everybody we try to help could do as well. And we are going to be great friends of Jacinth's, too."

All the Pixiekins worked away just as hard as they could, while Jacinth held her long red cloak out, and sheltered them from the gusts of wind. Willow's loom went "Slip-slap, Slip-slap, Slip-slap," as he wove the last of the strips needed to make the water-boots. And as they worked, they sang the loom song:

"Slip-slap, Slip-slap,
Slip, slip,—slip, slip,—slip,
The shuttle sings,
The heddle rings,
And the weaver works away.

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The fabric grows,
The pattern shows,
As the weaver works to-day.

“And he weaves his thoughts
In a golden web,
Till the pattern glorious shows,
As his actions fine,
Come forth in time,
With every thread he throws.

“The shuttle sings,
The heddle rings,
And the weaver works away.
The fabric grows,
The pattern shows,
As the weaver works to-day.
Slip-slap, slip-slap,
Slip, slip,—slip, slip,—slip.”

The last notes died away, as the looms went slower, and slower, and stopped when the work was finished.

“That is beautiful,” said Jacinth. “And how glad I am that you will have everything ready for the festival.”

“It’s only sewing the last of them together now,” said Oak. “Then we shall be through.”

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And Oak's needles and thread went, "Tick-tack, tick-tack, tick-tack," as he and his helpers were sewing the last of the water-boots together. And now, as they worked, they sang the cobblers' song:

"Tick-tack,—tick,
His needles bravely click,
As he stitches his thoughts,
And his words and his deeds,
His wishes and hopes, his fears and needs,
Into his work while his needles click,
Tick-tack,—tick.

"Tick-tack,—tick, tick, tick,
Faster his needles click,
Till his work is all done.
When his brain and his heart
Tell surely that he has done his part,
He cuts his thread, with his snip, snip, snip,
Tick-tack,—tick."

"Finished!" declared Chestnut. "Finished! and the sun has not yet set! We never could have done it, if Jacinth had not helped us. Three cheers for Jacinth!"

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" shouted every

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Pixiekin, as he put on his new water-boots, and Jacinth stood up, ready to start homeward.

“I have not helped you any more than you have helped me,” said Jacinth. “And now I must be going home, or Noel will be there before me!”

They all went together to the edge of Crystal Pool. Then Jacinth went along the rocks that led up the banks of the little stream, where she had left her basket, with the few strawberries in it that she had found.

“Good-by, good-by,” shouted all the Pixiekins, as they ran over the surface of Crystal Pool in their new water-boots, just as if they were skating on the water.

“We shall think of you, Jacinth,” they called. “And we shall watch for you to come back.”

“Good-by,” called Jacinth as she went her way up the banks of the little stream, that now ran merrily down its channel. As she looked up toward the big rocks where the spring was, there was the little old Lady of the Spring, waiting for her.

“I sent some of the Pixiekins to get the first of the pond-lilies for you and Noel,” she said to Jacinth.

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“ They had to explain to the very largest buds that they must hurry and open, so you could have them. And the plants have sent you these, to tell you how they thank you for helping clear the channel, so the water from the spring could reach them.”



Then Jacinth saw her basket, and the beautiful lily-buds filled it right up to the handle.

“ The pink ones,” continued the little old Lady of the Spring, “ bring the thanks of the plants, with all their glowing life and strength. And the yellow ones bring the thanks of the sunlight, whose color they



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show, that there is plenty of moisture to be drawn up into the air. And the white ones bring the thanks of the water, for making its task so much easier. Now, run along, child, or Noel will be home before you get his strawberries there for his supper.”

The Lady of the Spring waved her hand to Jacinth when she said this, and disappeared in a cloud of spray that rose up from the spring.

“Thank you, thank you,” called Jacinth. “For even if I cannot see you, perhaps you can hear me. This is a very wonderful place, and I do not know how many things are here that I do not understand.”

Then Jacinth picked up her basket of lilies, and went back to the little foot-path, where Gray Squirrel was waiting to go with her a little way toward the edge of Pixie Woods.

As she left Pixie Woods, and the little foot-path joined their own path that went from their cottage, right down into the valley, the sun was setting beyond the fields. All the sky was crimson and gold, and overhead it was the purest blue.

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The wind that had blown all day had ceased with the setting sun. The mists that had floated through the valley when Jacinth had entered the Woods, were gone. All the valley lay calm and clear, in that golden light before twilight.

As Jacinth came to their own path, she stood, shading her eyes from the sun's level rays, and looked down into the valley. There was Noel coming up the path. Jacinth went down to meet him.

"Oh, Noel!" she cried when they drew near together. "Noel, I have seen the Pixiekins!"

"You have?" said Noel. "Really seen them?"

"Yes," said Jacinth. "Really seen them and talked with them! And I have seen the little old Lady of the Spring, and she's just like Grandmother, only she's little, like Chestnut and Willow. And, Noel, see the pond-lilies the Lady of the Spring sent to us. She said they were for Noel and me. I tried to get some strawberries for your supper, but I did not get many, because it took so much time to help the Pixiekins. There are just a few in my basket."

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“We can get more strawberries at some other time,” said Noel. “But we don’t often get a chance to help the Pixiekins.”

Noel took the basket, and lifted out a couple of lilies, so he could see them better.

“But there’s more than lilies here, Little Sister,” he said, as he gently separated the flowers. “Just see, the Pixiekins filled your basket with the great, ripe wood-strawberries, before they laid the lilies on the top.”

They both looked into the basket, and saw the lilies were only a covering for the fruit below.

“I think the Pixiekins give us a great deal,” Noel said, “for every little thing we do for them.”

“Chestnut told me,” said Jacinth, “that he thought that to be useful to some one, so they needed you, was the very finest thing in the world.”

“And did you really see and talk with Chestnut and Willow, Jacinth?” Noel asked. “Oh, they are fine fellows!”

“Yes,” replied Jacinth. “And, Noel, they say

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that they are proud of you. If everybody would be as steady and strong as you have been, they say it would be the greatest help to them."

"Well, it's all their doing!" said Noel. "They are helping me all the time."

"And, Noel," confided Jacinth, "do you know, I really did not want to go to Grandmother's this morning, when I thought about it. But after I saw the Pixiekins, and the little old Lady of the Spring, and the Pixiekins told me how badly she felt because they had not cleared the channel for the spring, and how she thought they were neglecting her because she was old, Willow said, I understood how Grandmother would feel if she knew that I had not wanted to go to her when she wanted me. She might think that I was neglecting her because she was old, and I shouldn't like that to happen. And when they told me all that Gray Squirrel was willing to do to help them, and how it made them like her, I made up my mind that people should find me useful, too, and want me, if I could make them."

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“That’s what I’m trying to do, too,” said Noel. “And I never knew before how much it helped.”

“I’m going to take the very best care of Grandmother while I’m there,” said Jacinth. “And I will make the garden grow. Butterfly and Bumblebee are coming to see me every day. And Chestnut is going to leave a flower on our door-step every morning, if you will bring it to me.”

“Indeed, I will,” declared Noel. “I saw Grandmother this afternoon. Cousin Annie is going to stay with her also, so you will not be lonely.”



By NELLIE M. PAIRPOINT



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JACINTH AND HER
FAIRY FRIENDS

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